



## COMMISSION ON AGING

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### COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING

Minutes

February 22, 2016

**PRESIDING:** Sharonlee Vogel, Chair

#### **Members Attending**

Jennifer Asher  
Pete Brunner  
Angie Boyter  
Barbara Catlin  
Roxanne Farrar  
Deborah Fleischmann  
Susan Hailman  
Jan Horan  
Julia Mattis  
Bob McLaughlin  
Andrew Monjan  
Eletta Morse  
Carolyn Rimes  
S.K. Shin

#### **Not Present**

#### **Office on Aging**

Starr Sowers  
Terri Hansen  
Ofelia Ott

#### **Howard County Police Department**

Andre Lingham

#### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm.

#### **Approve Agenda**

Eletta Morse moved to accept the agenda, and Bob McLaughlin seconded the motion. Motion was approved. *All in favor. Agenda accepted.*

### **Approve Minutes**

Bob McLaughlin moved to accept the minutes of the previous meeting, and Angie Boyter seconded the motion. Motion was approved. *All in favor. Minutes accepted.*

The meeting began by welcoming new commissioner Jennifer Asher and introducing all Commissioners and Office on Aging staff.

### **Howard County Police Department Report**

Andre Lingham provided the Commission with a snapshot of crime statistics for those 65+ in Howard County. In 2014, there were 1928 reported victims aged 65+, in 2015, there were 1800. These numbers include all calls for service, a category which includes alarm calls, calls regarding an abandoned vehicle, and other non-violent crimes. Cases of fraud and identity theft have increased, and the Department has seen a large increase in the number of mental health cases. Both phone and online scams are still prevalent.

### **Office on Aging Report**

Starr Sowers provided an overview of the Office on Aging budget and sources of funds. The Office's total budget is approximately 9 million dollars and is made up of 61% county funds, 18% revenue, 11% state funds, 9% federal funds and 1% other grants.

In the upcoming fiscal year, the Office has requested funding for the following new efforts:

- Creation of an Assistant Administrator position which would be responsible for implementation of the master plan and marketing.
- Part-time Ombudsman position. The Office is separating the Ombudsman and Guardianship program to more closely resemble state models and will need an additional part-time Ombudsman to meet program demands.
- Request refunding of a currently unfunded (in FY16) MAP position. The Office would like to fill this position with a candidate with a strong mental health background.
- Request to change a part-time, contingent SHIP position to a fulltime position.
- Increase the county funds to the SALGHS (Small Assisted Living Group Home Subsidy) Program by \$25,000. Currently funding for SALGHS is provided only through state funding. Additional contribution from the County would offer additional residents the chance to receive subsidy dollars.
- Create a Case Management Fund. This fund would offer residents a sliding scale for case management in the community. The Office would partner with geriatric case managers in the community to provide this service.

Starr also shared information on a partnership between the Department of Citizen Services and PALs to complete an Aging in Place survey. The Commission is encouraged to both take the survey and share the link with their networks. The survey will be live February 24.

Starr announced that this year's 50+ EXPO, to be held October 21, would have a technology theme. New this year, the Office is partnering with the Office of Workforce Development to offer a job fair at EXPO.

### **Adult Public Guardianship Program**

Ofelia Ott, presented an overview of the Office's Adult Public Guardianship Program. The program provides a court-appointed decision maker for adults over 65 who, because of mental disability, are unable to make informed decisions about their medical care, residence, and safety and who do not have

another entity to make these decisions. The Office currently has 22 wards in the Guardianship Program and average length of guardianship is a minimum of five-six years.

The Office currently employs a fulltime Guardianship Case Manager who visits all wards at least once per month, although visits are only required once per quarter. Referrals to the program frequently come from other agencies, usually Howard County General Hospital or Adult Protective Services. The guardian: determines residence; provides for the care, comfort, education, social and recreational needs; requests funds for the person's care from the guardian of property; and cares for the wards personal effects. Each year, the Office submits a report on each ward to the court detailing their current residence and the health status of the ward.

### **Transportation and Senior Transportation**

Terri Hansen provided the Commission with an overview of the transportation services available within Howard County.

RTA, the public transit agency for the county offers both fixed-route and paratransit services. All fixed-route buses eventually travel to the Mall in Columbia. RTA does offer reduced fees for adults over 60 and those 18-59 with a disability.

General Paratransit Services (offered through RTA) provide curb-to-curb service for medical appointments, visits to 50+ centers, and visits to jobs/school or social service agencies. General Paratransit is available for \$2.50 one way, to those riders aged 60+ or 18-59 with a disability. On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, General Paratransit Services are offered to designated hospitals in Baltimore.

ADA Paratransit requires certification and a meeting with RTA. Riders must live within  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile of a fixed -route stop and be traveling to within  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile of a fixed-route stop. For ADA Paratransit, there is no limit to a ride's purpose, but the distance requirement applies.

Terri also shared information about NeighborRide, the CA Senior Events Shuttle, and shared that Uber and Lyft are operating within Howard County.

Following Terri's presentation, Bob McLaughlin reminded the Commission of the concept proposal he submitted to the County Executive for HC Senior Ride. The proposal was a public-private partnership between local government and cab companies to subsidize the cost of cab rides and encourage independence for residents.

Sharonlee Vogel inquired about the status of Mr. Kittleman's campaign comment about some kind of "senior shuttle" going between sites that seniors frequently go between.

### **Chair's Report**

Sharonlee Vogel shared that the COA Orientation handbook had been submitted to the Office for revisions. There have been suggestions to change the name to COA Handbook instead of Orientation.

Sharonlee also articulated a desire to return to the subcommittee structure previously used by the Commission. To begin with, Sharonlee suggested the following subcommittees (commissioners would serve on one committee): government relations, caregiving, health and wellness, budget. Commissioners were invited to send Sharonlee their thoughts on the proposed subcommittees.

In April, the Commission will meet at the Bain Center. Reminders will be sent to all Commissioners.

A public hearing will be held on March 9 at 7pm in the George Howard Building regarding the requested gas and electric increases from BGE. The requested change was a 3% increase in the electricity rate and an 8.6% increase in the gas rate.

### **Senior Issues Heard (Sharing from Commissioners)**

Debbie Fleischmann shared that the hospital is beginning a Stroke Survivor Peer Mentoring Program. Members of the stroke survivor group want to share their experiences and provide hope to newer survivors.

Carolyn Rimes shared that she heard concerns from those using Central and East Columbia libraries regarding the accessibility of books during library renovations.

Pete Brunner provided information on a possible partnership between The Village in Howard and Howard County General Hospital regarding reducing readmissions.

Andrew Monjan shared knowledge gained during his travel about how family centric elder care is in some parts of the world.

Susan Hailman provided feedback from the snowstorm. The Village was contacted frequently regarding snow removal by citizens that were feeling isolated and trapped. She suggested a newsletter before winter that would clarify what was possible even during a snow storm; for example, an ambulance WOULD be able to reach you.

Jennifer Asher shared that during the snow storm she heard of neighbors having issues getting to their barns to take care of animals.

Eletta Morse reported hearing concerns about an overall lack of handicapped parking spaces in the county.

Sharonlee Vogel announced that the Howard County Citizens Association would be holding another senior forum on April 9. More information will be shared as it becomes available.

Roxanne Farrar let the Commission know that HCC's spring schedule was available online and that Patty Keaton had passed away.

S.K. Shin shared information on Meals on Wheels connecting with Bethel Church for a possible grant partnership to deliver Korean meals in the community.

Julia Mattis reported issues regarding reverse mortgages: while many homeowners have taken out a reverse mortgage, they didn't adequately prepare to pay taxes. In several cases, this has forced people out of their homes.

Barbara Catlin shared that she will be offering groups on Grief and the Transition from Caregiving and Aging in Elderhood.

Angie Boyter shared information about an article on the relationship between untreated hearing loss and dementia. She also offered praise for the Office on Aging and Rec and Parks program GoFit50+.

Jan Horan shared a MAP success story and let everyone know that she will continue visiting centers as the weather improves.

**CA SAC**

No report.

**New Business**

None.

**Adjournment**

Barbara Catlin motioned to adjourn. Bob McLaughlin seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 9:10pm.

Recording Secretary: Jennifer Rittenhouse

Next Meeting: March 28, Ellicott City 50+ Center, 7pm